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Senators applaud efforts of cervical cancer survivor and musician Christine Baze

Baze and her band, The Skills of Ortega, to perform in Kalamazoo on October 23

LANSING – Underscoring their strong commitment to eliminate cervical cancer in Michigan women, state Sens. Beverly Hammerstrom, Patty Birkholz and Tom George, M.D., today commended cervical cancer survivor and musician Christine Baze, who is using her music to help spread the message that cervical cancer is preventable.

Baze and her band, The Skills of Ortega, will perform at The Club Soda in Kalamazoo on Saturday, Oct. 23. During the concert, Baze will talk about her own experience with cervical cancer and urge women to get screened regularly, using the most accurate methods available.

"I'm pleased to join Senators George and Hammerstrom in welcoming this remarkable woman to our state to share her own battle with cervical cancer," said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township. "We are excited to have Christine and her band play here in Michigan to help educate our citizens about this disease."

Baze, 35, was diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer in 2000, just as her musical career was taking off. She underwent a radical hysterectomy, followed by weeks of radiation and four rounds of chemotherapy. After beating back the cancer, it took her months – and a lot of hard work – to overcome the depression that followed and to get back her desire to play music. Baze is now using her music and her story to raise awareness about cervical cancer and the need for all women to get screened using the most accurate tests available, in accordance with medical guidelines.

"I first heard Christine's story at a Women In Government conference last year and there wasn't a dry eye in the room," said Hammerstrom, R-Temperance. "We need young women like Christine to tell their stories and try to reach other young women to tell them that yes, this can happen to them. My colleagues and I are equally committed to getting the message out to all Michigan residents. Cervical cancer is now one of the only cancers that can be prevented with the right precautions."

Hammerstrom, who chairs the Senate Health Policy Committee, sponsored a resolution in May asking the governor to appoint a task force in an effort to raise awareness of cervical cancer in the state and reduce the number of women diagnosed with the disease. SR 261 is part of a national campaign, the Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer, launched in January 2004 by Women In Government, a Washington, DC-based organization representing state-level elected officials.

To date, Women In Government members' legislation or resolutions addressing cervical cancer have been introduced in 18 states and passed in 13 states. For more information, please visit www.womeningovernment.org.

"I encourage people in the Kalamazoo area to support Christine Baze's tour and her effort to spread the message that cervical cancer is preventable," said George, R-Texas Township.

George noted that Baze's concert in Kalamazoo is one of two stops in Michigan and more than 20 stops around the country for the *Yellow Umbrella Tour*. For more information, visit www.yellowumbrellatour.com.

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